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THE JUGOSLAV SOCIALISTS

Memorandum

ADDRESSED BY

The Jugoslav Socialists

TO

The International Socialist Peace Conference in Stockholm.

THE JUGOSLAVS (The Southern Slavs) *i.e.*, the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, are by blood, language, and tradition, no less than by economic and political conditions, one homogeneous nation, with identical aims in their national life.

They form the compact population of the Kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro (pop. 5,000,000), of the Jugoslav provinces in Austria-Hungary (Jugoslav pop. 7,000,000) and of the Italian district west of Gorica (40,000 Jugoslavs), whereas 800,000 Jugoslavs live as emigrants in overseas countries, making a total of 12,840,000.

In Austria-Hungary the Jugoslavs are subordinated to two dominant State organizations, viz., the German and the Magyar. Their territory is broken up into ten provinces; they are politically oppressed, socially persecuted, and in every way hampered and menaced in their intellectual, economic, and national development.

There are 2,100,000 Jugoslavs under the German administration in Vienna. Of these 410,000 live in Southern Styria, 120,000 in Southern Carinthia, 490,000 in Carniola, 155,000 in Gorica-Gradiska, 70,000 in Trieste, 225,000 in Istria, and 610,000 in Dalmatia

Under the Magyar domination there are 3,020,000 Jugoslavs, viz., 2,300,000 in Croatia - Slavonia, and 720,000 in Southern and South - Western Hungary (in the Medjumurje along the Styrian frontier, in the Baranja, Backa, and Banat).

A joint Austro-Hungarian administration controls the 1,900.000 Jugoslavs living in Bosnia-Hercegovina.

Finally, there are 40,000 Jugoslavs under Italian rule.

The Jugoslavs have always desired to form an independent State, and to lead their own national life free from all foreign domination, whether Turkish, Venetian, or Austro-Hungarian. Both in Serbia and Montenegro they have already achieved and developed their freedom, but all attempts to obtain even partial unification and the conditions for national development within the borders of Austro-Hungary have invariably proved unsuccessful.

All unredeemed Jugoslavs look to the successful issue of the present war waged by Serbia and Montenegro and their mighty Allies to accomplish their complete deliverance from foreign domination. And they hope that in accordance with the principle of nationality they will be permitted to realize their ideals of union with their free brothers in the two kingdoms, and of the unification of the national territory in one single independent State.

PREFACE.

We are publishing our Memorandum for the information of Socialist and bourgeois public opinion in Europe on the subject of the Jugoslav Question which is so little known and so much misunderstood abroad. As will be seen from this Memorandum, we Southern Slavs, or Jugoslavs (Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) are one single people which has been politically, nationally and economically subjugated. Now, every people which is oppressed by another is by that very fact debarred from evolving normally in any direction. All its forces are wasted in the struggle against the intolerable foreign yoke. Our Memorandum illustrates this fact with sufficient clearness.

Under these circumstances it is, of course, equally impossible for the Socialist movement to develop among the Southern Slavs, since all conditions favourable to a class struggle are lacking. The Jugoslav nation is cut up between Serbia and Montenegro, and a whole mass of units in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which are politically, economically and administratively distinct from one another. For this reason, and so long as this State of dispersion shall continue, all progress of any kind is out of the question for this nation, whose national, political and economic aims are all common and identical.

No class of the Jugoslav population has suffered more from this than the proletariat. That is why our Socialists were the first to recognise the source of all the ills from which the whole nation is suffering and to understand the need for union. Instead of taking the direction of a separatist nationalism, as reflected in the various national designations among the Jugoslavs, they have put forward the collective national designation of *Jugoslavs*. This division of the Southern Slavs according to three national designations (Serb, Croat, Slovene) often played off one against the other by their oppressors, has done as much harm to the progress of each of them, and consequently also to the common progress of all, as their politico-administrative dispersion. It was detrimental to the Socialist ideal—so essentially one and indivisible—and particularly so within the heart of a single people, to have to submit to this forcible fracture into Serb, Croat, Bosnian, Dalmatian, Slovene, etc., Socialist parties.

All these parties are compelled to assert themselves under differing conditions of life, to spend their principal efforts in divergent directions, and thus to dissipate the common strength in action, which is more often than not unfruitful and almost always insufficient. This situation, and the consciousness of the root of the evil, have urged the Jugoslav Socialists to come in touch with each other through a

congress. In January, 1910, they succeeded in bringing about the convocation of an inter-Balkan Socialist Congress at which the union of all Jugoslavs in one sole State organism was placed first among the claims of the Southern Slav proletarians.

Our bourgeois politicians received this claim with a sceptical smile in its day, and accused us of being Utopians. Who among "sensible and practical statesmen" would have said at the time that this claim could ever descend from the realms of pious aspirations? To-day the problem of Jugoslavia is being faced and discussed not only by our own statesmen, but by those of the whole world. It is therefore perfectly comprehensible that at this moment when the principle of the freedom of peoples to dispose of themselves is victorious we must not fail in our duty as the first pioneers of the Jugoslav Idea. The interest of Socialism, more than any other consideration, demands that the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes living in Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Istria, Carniola, Carinthia, Styria, the basin of the Mur, Baranja, Bačka, the Banat, Bosnia and Hercegovina should be united in one sole independent and sovereign Jugoslav State embracing all the territories aforesaid, in which our people forms the continuous population. As regards the Southern Slavs not included in this future Jugoslavia, we demand autonomy for them according to the personal principle. With a view to obviating sanguinary conflicts in the future we demand the open door for all nations as regards the Adriatic and, in conformity with the principle "the Balkans for the Balkan peoples," we likewise demand liberty for the Albanians.

Touching the statistics contained in this Memorandum with reference to the population of the territories in dispute, I have—in view of the unreliability of the accepted statistics—given lower figures than those quoted by our nationalists. My statistics are therefore, if anything, unfavourable to the Jugoslav claims. As for the number of our emigrants, I have had to rely upon the figures given in our papers in the United States, as the official statistics are too incomplete.

And so, true to our first programme, now that Jugoslavia has become a problem in practical politics, we repeat once more our old Socialist watchword, falsely called Utopian: *Unified Jugoslavia.*

M. Radošević.

Petrograd, October, 1917.

Memorandum of the Socialist Parties of Bosnia and Hercegovina and of Croatia-Slavonia.

On August 10th, 1917, the Hollando-Scandinavian Committee received the delegation of the Socialist party of Bosnia and Hercegovina, represented by Comrade Franjo Markić, and the delegation from Croatia and Slavonia, represented by Comrade Dr. Mihailo Radošević.

The two delegations put forward their views in the following joint declaration:—

"It is generally admitted that the immediate cause of the war and the pretext for it are to be found in the Eastern Problem, *i.e.*, in the contest between the imperialist Great Powers on the one hand and the little Balkan States on the other over the Turkish inheritance in Europe and Asia. The most acute factor in this problem is the Jugoslav Question. For the sake of the establishment of durable peace in the Balkans to avoid the renewal of the crisis which brought about the present war and to stifle the germs of fresh imperialist eruptions, we demand that this Jugoslav Question should be solved in its entirety by the Peace Congress, in accordance with the principles of International Law and the right of free self-determination of peoples. Organised proletariat, enlightened and conscious of class antagonism, has discovered the just solution of the Balkan problem. At the first Inter-Balkan Socialist Conference in January, 1910, the representatives of all Socialist parties declared unanimously in favour of a Confederation of the independent Balkan States. This solution was likewise adopted by the Southern Slavs of Austria-Hungars, viz., the Croats, Serbs and Slovenes.

In the midst of the present universal conflagration the Jugoslav bourgeoisie is evolving daily within sight and ken of the whole world. It is really undergoing an historic transformation and is taking part in the struggle for the creation of an independent Jugoslav State, free from all foreign domination.

The Southern Slavs inhabit:—

I. In the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy:

(*a*) Croatia-Slavonia (area: 42,534 sq. km.; population: 2,621,954).

(*b*) Dalmatia and the Dalmatian Islands (area: 12,835 sq. km.; population: 700,000, of whom 3 per cent., or 5 per cent. at the most, are Italians).

(*c*) Bosnia and Hercegovina (area: 51,199 sq. km.; population: 1,938,802).

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(*d*) The South-East of Hungary (Baranja, Bačka and the Banat) where live a quarter of a million Jugoslavs.

(*e*) Istria, the Quarnero Islands and Trieste (area: 4,956 sq. km.; population, according to the official statistics: 220,382 Jugoslavs, and 145,525 Italians in Istria and the Islands).

(*f*) Carniola, Gorica, Carinthia, Styria and South-Western Hungary, with a total Jugoslav population of one million and a half.

II. Outside the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Europe:

(*a*) Serbia.

(*b*) Montenegro.

(*c*) Bulgaria.

III. The Jugoslav emigrants in America, Asia and Africa number one million and a half.

After the French Revolution had brought about our national resurrection, there arose among us, in our bourgeoisie, a nationalist ideology which gave rise in our bourgeoisie to a feeling of national unity embracing Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. This has not prevented the Socialists from including also the Bulgars among the Jugoslavs, seeing that the former are by their traditions and ethnic characteristics just as much Jugoslavs as are the Serbs, Slovenes and Croats.

The historic masters of the Jugoslavs have not been content merely to keep the latter under their foreign yoke through the unlimited power of their police-run States; they have resorted to falsehood in order to represent them as a backward race, savage, inferior, incapable of all progress and unworthy of all liberty.

In the Middle Ages the Jugoslavs had their own independent States. After the downfall of these the Jugoslavs endured slavery under many masters—Turks, Venetians, Germans, Hungarians. The great nostalgia of the Jugoslavs for Liberty is traced in their blood on many pages of the world's history. Serbia did not succeed in freeing herself from the Turkish yoke until after thirty years of wars and insurrections (1804-1833). In Bosnia and Hercegovina there were the insurrections of the Mussulmans in 1832 and 1850, and those of the Orthodox Serbs in 1833, 1857, 1861 and 1878. The aim of all these insurrections was the liberation of Bosnia and Hercegovina from the Turkish yoke. All these sanguinary struggles, all these sacrifices for the sake of the cause of liberation merely led to the occupation followed by the annexations of these provinces by Austria-Hungary. In Croatia-Slavonia there was the sanguinary rising of Rakovica by the Serbo-Croats in 1871, an attempt to free Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia from Austro-Hungarian despotism. The leaders of this movement (Eugen Kvaternik and his companions) paid for their patriotism with their lives. Fin-

ally, in recent years revolutions have broken out in Croatia-Slavonia in 1883 and in 1903, and in Bosnia in 1906. The last-named movement was initiated by a general strike by the Socialist workers. All these insurrections which are also well-known and recorded abroad, as well as many others which have passed unnoted, were stifled in blood by the brute force of our rulers. The Southern Slavs, though conquered in the fight, have never ceased to have faith in the justice of their cause and to hope for final victory.

It is Austria-Hungary who has sinned the most against the small dismembered nation of the Southern Slavs, and that both within and without the Danubian Empire. In order to realise their agrarian policy of famine and to keep up the price of live stock in Austria-Hungary free from all competition, the great landlords of the country obtained the closing of the Austro-Hungarian frontier against Serbia. The Serbs replied to this step by closing their own frontier against the industrial products of Austria-Hungary. To revenge herself for this act of independence and legitimate self-defence, and in order to cut off Serbia from other outlets Austria-Hungary decided to cut off Serbia from free access to the sea. Austro-Hungarian imperialism, on the strength of its might as a Great Power, has for decades made implacable economic war upon weak little Serbia. This long-drawn economic war of destruction culminated finally in the present world war, when Austria-Hungary found in Princip's crime in Sarajevo a sufficient pretext for strangling her inconvenient little neighbour and thus destroying the germ of Jugoslav independence outside of the Danubian Empire.

The Jugoslavs have always been inimically treated by Austria-Hungary, both before and during the war. In order to weaken and dislocate our nation, she has divided it into seven small administrative units, governed by as many different Diets and possessing divergent economic interests. In the Central Parliaments of Vienna and Budapest the Jugoslavs are only represented by delegates condemned to form an insignificant minority. This destructive dismemberment of one homogenous nation into several economic units has had a pernicious influence upon the Socialist movement among the Southern Slavs and has led to the formation of separate Croat, Slovene, Dalmatian, Istrian, etc., Socialist parties. Although these parties look upon themselves as forming part of one national unity, they are condemned to exist as best they can separately in a state of economic and intellectual misery.

This Austro-Hungarian policy, which our Austro-Hungarian comrades have in their Memorandum declared to be "favourable to the preservation of small nationalities," has been so successful with regard to the Austro-Hungarian Jugoslavs from the point of view of intellectual development that, notwithstanding our thirst for instruction, we take the lowest

place in the statistics of illiterates in Austria-Hungary. After forty years of this "civilisatory" activity on the part of Austria-Hungary we have only one State school in Bosnia for every 4,052 inhabitants, *i.e.*, one school for an area of 111 sq. km. The 458 primary schools existing in Bosnia and Hercegovina owe their foundation, for the most part, to private societies. In Istria there are 44,550 Jugoslav children of school age, only 28,778 of whom receive instruction in the schools. In Carinthia there is one State school for every 1,008 German inhabitants, and only one Jugoslav school for 27,404 Slovenes. In Hungary, thanks to the policy of oppression pursued by the Magyar *Junkers*, we have no Jugoslav schools at all. The conditions with regard to primary instruction in Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, Carniola and other Jugoslav provinces are, proportionately, similar to those we have just quoted. Since the war the schoolmasters have been called to the colours, the schools have been closed and public instruction has sunk to a yet lower level among the Southern Slavs.

What have been the consequences of this unfavourable policy towards Southern Slav education? Obviously an appalling number of illiterates, viz., 90 per cent. in Bosnia and Hercegovina and from 50 per cent. to 70 per cent. in the other Jugoslav provinces. The public courses of instruction organised by private initiative in Bosnia and Hercegovina in order to remedy this state of affairs, were simply forbidden by the Government of the Province and those which used to exist in the other Jugoslav provinces have been suppressed since the outbreak of the war. By this policy it is made utterly impossible for the Jugoslavs to fight against ignorance among the masses. Those who nevertheless attempt the struggle are immediately prosecuted by the "Kulturtraeger" (the bearers of civilisation)—as their masters are wont to style themselves—and accused of high treason before judges of excessive severity. As a matter of fact, the Austro-Hungarian powers that be in the Jugoslav lands do not trouble about education in the lands entrusted to their wisdom. They are too much taken up with cares concerning the development of the police and the gendermerie. Thus in Bosnia and Hercegovina the annual expenses for the Gendermerie amount to 3,753,189 crowns, and those for public instruction barely to 675,000.

What we have just said touching primary education, applies equally to secondary and higher education. The only establishments belonging to this category which are encouraged by the Austro-Hungarian Government are the ecclesiastic seminaries (Catholic, Orthodox and Mussulman). There is no university either in Dalmatia or in Bosnia-Hercegovina or in Carniola. There are only theological seminaries. Most of the Southern Slavs of Austria-Hungary are debarred from prosecuting their advanced studies in their

native tongue. As for those who graduate at the Croat University of Zagreb, their degrees are refused recognition.

All that the Southern Slavs have so far acquired in the domain of education has not been obtained with the help of the State, but is the result of long-drawn battles against the might of a great Empire and has been won at the cost of great sacrifice. The Jugoslav champions in this field are unceasingly subjected to every excess of ruthless and refined persecution. The authorities persist in practising towards the Southern Slavs the famous policy which "favours" their development.

That is why the whole policy of the Southern Slavs as regards Austria-Hungary is limited at present exclusively to a fierce struggle against the oppression to which they are subjected. Not one of the Constitutions in any of the Jugoslav provinces is deserving of the name because they are mere constitutional travesties.

All kinds of electoral systems possible or imaginable, combined with the division into wards according to class interest and religious denomination, serve only to maintain the ascendancy of the Agas (Mussulman feudal barons) and other feudal landlords as well as that of the prelacy. That is why we have not one single Southern Slav Socialist representative in Austria-Hungary.

The great national resurrection of our people which began in Zagreb in 1832 manifested itself first under the name of "Illyrism," and then under that of "Jugo-Slavia" (South Slavia) and demanded the union of the entire nation dwelling between the Triglav (a mountain in Carniola), Scutari and Varna and including all Serbs, Bulgars, Croats and Slovenes. Later on this claim assumed a concrete form among the Southern Slavs of Austria-Hungary in the union of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. This has also been the claim of every Diet and every Parliament in the Jugoslav provinces of Austria-Hungary both before and during the war. Nevertheless this movement was fiercely persecuted by the Austro-Hungarian ruling powers and this persecution increased in proportion as the Jugoslav ideal gained ground in the parliamentary bodies.

Briefly, then, the sole principle whereby the governmental policy is actuated towards the Southern Slavs in all provinces has always been one of favouring the "Agas," the feudal squires and priests, the demoralisation and corruption of all classes of the population, the exploitation and pauperising of the peasantry. In Bosnia and Hercegovina we have 112,000 families of serfs, 650,000 persons in all, who live in a state of veritable mediaeval slavery and work like beasts of burden for 10,000 Mussulman Aga families. In Dalmatia the Jugoslav peasant languishes under the latin form of serfdom, the state of the *colonati*. Finally, in the rest of the Jugoslav lands we have the modern form of serfdom, the

serfdom of the mortgage weighing down the rural masses; they are still paying off the price of their emancipation from serfdom, promulgated in 1848.

This financial burden weighs all the more heavily upon the Jugoslav peasants as all the banks and all loan institutions are run by squires and priests, so that the mediaeval mastery of the latter has not been really abolished in any of the Jugoslav provinces; except in Bosnia and Hercegovina, it has merely changed its form. This is all the more striking, when we consider that in the Kingdom of Serbia and in Bulgaria, neither of which command either the great material resources or the great reputation as a civilising factor possessed by Austria-Hungary—and it is on the strength of the latter that she insinuated herself into Bosnia-Hercegovina by the mandate of Europe—the old mediaeval and Turkish system of serfdom was promptly replaced by the modern system. In the end the Southern Slavs found no other means of counteracting these miseries than escape from our ill-starred lands. According to the official statistics of 1910, 400,000 persons, *i.e.*, from ten to fifteen per cent. of the whole population of Croatia-Slavonia, were at the time in America. It is the same with the other provinces. If one takes into consideration that these emigrants are all adults and able-bodied men, one will readily understand that emigration on this scale is tantamount to positive depopulation, to an extermination of the Southern Slavs in Austria-Hungary. In most cases the emigrants are replaced by German and Magyar settlers. It is superfluous to comment further from the Socialist point of view upon this method of internal colonisation solely with the object of ousting one people at the expense of another. That is why we, as Socialists, and therefore hostile to the oppression of any people, protest and fight so emphatically against this form of Germanisation and Magyarisation.

Monstrous political trials, like the famous High Treason Trial in Zagreb with 53 defendants, and the Friedjung Case in Vienna in which Austria-Hungary compromised herself before the whole world by producing forged documents in evidence, and yet other trials without number followed by judicial murders and an unbridled orgy of repression on the part of the police, had already before the war produced among the Jugoslav population an atmosphere of such political sultriness, that it discharged itself spontaneously in bombs and revolver shots. They seemed to be the only weapons wherewith to oppose the implacable regime of the ruling powers. The result was the series of murderous attempts by Žerajić (June 15th, 1910) in Sarajevo, and by Jukić (June 8th, 1912), Dojčić (August 18th, 1912), and Šefer (May 20th, 1913) in Zagreb.

When this series of outrages culminated in the present war, the oppressive police regime of the ruling powers surpassed itself in unending and unlimited terror. Trial followed trial, each entailing death penalties or sentences of never-ending incarceration. For the sake of example, let us mention that out of 118 defendants in Banjanluka, 18 were sentenced to death, and 82 to a total of 820 years of incarceration besides a fine of fourteen million crowns. In another trial, also in Banjaluka, 28 schoolboys figured as defendants, in Mostar 9, in Trebinje and Sarajevo 65, and in Donja Tuzla 38. In full accord with the court martials, both military and civil tribunals are indefatigable in accomplishing their bloody business. The public at large has never known and will never know the full tale of victims—which exceeds several thousands—because the Press has been charged to keep silence. It is this kind of two-fold oppression that determined citizen Adler to resort to the revolver. It is possible to form an idea of the Jugoslav situation from the fact that in the Slav lands in the south the papers are forbidden to reprint matter even from the Vienna and Budapest Press. The censorship even extends its rage for confiscation to calendars printed in cyrillic characters (the Slav alphabet), musical compositions and—since the war—also to Orthodox religious literature and thousands of perfectly harmless books, reviews and pamphlets. It naturally deals with extreme severity with all reports of "political" trials.

Nothing, or practically nothing, is known of the trials that take place before the military courts; very little is known of what goes on in the civil courts, and on the top of this we have the special solicitude of the censorship. For these combined reasons it is very difficult for us to trace, even in very scanty detail, the *via dolorosa* of the Jugoslavs and to estimate even approximately the number of victims claimed by prosecution on the part of the Austro-Hungarian ruling powers. We will simply state as a characteristic fact that the Southern Slavs (Bosnia and Hercegovina and Croatia-Slavonia) have been excluded from the amnesty granted by the new Sovereign to the peoples of the Monarchy.

It is one of the great misfortunes of the Southern Slavs that the territory they inhabit adjoins the present theatre of war. This has already so far caused the shedding of much innocent blood. Southern Slavs have been taken as hostages by their own Government, and when the Serbian, Italian or French guns break into thunder anywhere these hostages are taken to the danger spots and made to serve as targets by their criminal rulers who delight in watching the terror of their victims. Against this savagery of the Austro-Hungarian soldiery, our deputy Biankini raised a vigorous protest in the Vienna Parliament.

But all this has not sufficed for the Austro-Hungarian Government. To all these evils they have added that of

famine. The Jugoslav population of Dalmatia and Istria is succumbing wholesale to starvation. In Bosnia and Hercegovina the Government deputy G. Hreljanović interpellated the Government concerning the danger of famine menacing about one million of the inhabitants of these two provinces. The Government Speaker replied that so far only 200 persons had succumbed to starvation in Bosnia and Hercegovina. It is monstrous, but it is true and authentic.

In order to show how far our judgment is not obscured by national bias we will quote an article from the organ of the Magyar Socialist party, the Budapest paper *Nepszava*, of July 24th, 1914. Here we read:

"Not content with having made war inevitable and with having started it, they (the Austro-Hungarian ruling powers) aspire to solve bloodily and in blood these (Jugoslav) Questions which their despotism, their incapacity and their hostility towards the people have rendered insoluble. Bosnia was conquered by force, and force alone can retain it for the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. That is why the domination of the Monarchy in Bosnia is a foreign domination. To this day it is under the rule of military despotism, bureaucratic meanness the vanity of military men who have triumphed over a handful of badly armed people, and officials of slight intelligence and unacquainted with the language of the country. To bureaucracy and militarism, clericalism has joined itself as the third of a rascal trio. The Soldier, red tape and the Jesuit form the triple entente, the emblem of Austro-Hungarian domination in Bosnia. The whole political, economic and religious life of the country is handed over to this trio. The working classes are oppressed together with the rest of the population. The Serb peasant is still permitted to languish in veritable serfdom. Nothing has been done to deliver him from the secular yoke of the Mussulman feudal lords. The masters of the country have invented a thousand police stratagems to oppress the national life of the Bosnian Serbs. They have enslaved the peasant and strangled the national movement of the bourgeoisie; they are harassing the proletariat. They have made themselves hated by everybody and have befriended no one but the reactionary element in the country, the Mussulman landlords."

Thus it is perfectly true that for decades militarism, feudal reaction, the rule of the squire and the priest brigaded with incapable officials, foreigners, corrupt and corrupters, were the only "glories" of the policy of nationality as practised by the Austro-Hungarian ruling powers towards the Southern Slavs, with the help of gallows, bayonets and prisons, and that to this policy there was no other reply possible but bombs and revolver shots.

It is the climax of tragic irony that the Southern Slavs, who are to-day exposed to famine, inhabit the granary of the Balkans. Vast fields and plains lie stretched beneath a

Southern sky favourable to a most profitable cultivation of cereals, vegetables, wine and all kinds of fruit, if only the agrarian conditions were slightly improved. Beautiful scenery offers attractions to the tourist. The mineral wealth of the country (iron, copper, coal, etc.) and the large and valuable forests which abound in the Jugoslav lands have never been exploited for the good of the people. The lumbermen of Croatia-Slavonia, who number 50,000, are backward from the point of view of class consciousness and education. They are completely at the mercy of the great foreign landlords and irresponsible bureaucrats.

Just as the Jugoslav people represent an ethnic unit, the provinces inhabited by them form, from a geographical point of view, an economic unit. It is only for the sake of the imperialist economic interests of Austria-Hungary, which demand that the Jugoslav lands should be treated like African colonies, that the economic centres of the Southern Slavs have been transferred to Vienna and Budapest. The freight rates on the railway are fixed in the interests of the Hungarian capitalists, and this paralyses the development of commerce and industry in Croatia-Slavonia and Bosnia and Hercegovina. The cost of transporting merchandise by rail from one town to another in Croatia and Bosnia is higher than that of sending the goods *via* Hungary.

Apart from this, railways and other modern means of communication are restricted to something even less than the minimum of elementary requirement in the Jugoslav lands. A glance at the map will suffice to show the perfect natural formation of the Dalmatian coastline, and yet not a single Dalmatian port has ever been utilised in the interests of the Southern Slavs. There are scarcely any railways; those that exist are mostly single-track lines and constructed solely for strategic purposes. In this way Dalmatia is artificially cut off from her own backlands, from Croatia-Slovenia and Bosnia and Hercegovina. All this provided the population of Dalmatia with an added incentive to emigration.

The German and Hungarian bourgeoisie has no use for competition, either in the South of the Monarchy or in the East in general, where it wishes to be able to sell its goods upon its own terms. To achieve this object in Austria-Hungary, it has had recourse in turns to political and economic coercion, and in order to attain it in the Balkans it has had recourse to the present war. For it the Jugoslav problem has also been merely a question of who is the strongest.

It is obvious that the position of all conscious proletarians is extremely painful in this backward atmosphere, steeped in political illegality and ceaseless economic oppression. This strait-jacket which was compressing Jugoslav Socialism was slightly relaxed under the effects of the new breath of

liberty and democracy which travelled over the whole world —thanks to the glorious Russian Revolution. On June 5th, 1917, the Croatian Diet was convoked, for the first time since the beginning of the war. The Socialists of Croatia-Slavonia wanted to take advantage of this occasion to demonstrate in favour of the democratisation of political life. We convoked a mass meeting for June 3rd, 1917, for discussing "Political Conditions in Croatia-Slavonia and the Labour claims in the Croatian Diet," but the meeting was prohibited. As we possess absolutely no rights, our only means of replying to this prohibition was to address a petition to the Diet. This petition, which describes the state of acute distress and misery prevailing among the Jugoslav proletariat, is couched in the following terms:—

"To the Chamber of Deputies.

"The working classes and the Socialist party of Croatia-Slavonia have been the greatest sufferers under the state of war. All labour societies, without exception, have been dissolved, all newspapers seized, and the right of assembly has been abolished. Thus the workers have not means nor opportunity of voicing their opinion or defending their interests.

"The war is pressing most hardly, in particular, upon the urban proletariat. This class, the weakest economically, is exposed to the most acute privation and most dire distress. The wretched state of the conditions, the cause for which must rather be sought in the disorganisation of transport and food distribution than in an actual lack of foodstuffs, are felt most keenly in the ranks of the working classes, where they are causing veritable dismay. The exorbitant cost of living leads to under-feeding, lack of clothing and insanitary dwellings; thence arise ceaseless epidemics, incapacitation for work, and finally economic ruin, crime and prostitution. The workers have no legal remedy at their disposal to bring about an improvement in their position, as they have been deprived of all recources of this kind. They have to be content with very low wages, which do not permit them even to spend enough on food, let alone clothing, rent and other necessaries of life. These terrible conditions are growing worse from day to day.

"In the labour centres, exasperation and despair are steadily increasing, while the working classes have no means of voicing their opinion and defending their interests. All political action, all trades' unionism, even the exercise of the right of assembly and of the Press are forbidden them. On the other hand, they have no representative of their own in the legislative assemblies, no one who could convey the grievance of the workers to the authorities and plead for intervention to ameliorate these social evils.

"Under these tragic circumstances, and in view of the general political conditions prevailing in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy the undersigned, being authorised thereto

by the Socialist workers of Zagreb, address themselves to the Croatian Diet. They would remind it of the long struggles which the Socialist party in common accord with the greater number of the parties and groups which constitute the present majority in the Croatian Diet, has had to wage in order to obtain that shadow of liberty which the country enjoyed before the war, and they call upon it to raise its voice so that at least these limited pre-war liberties may be respected. At the same time, the undersigned hope that the representatives of the people, imbued with the democratic spirit which is at this very moment overthrowing injustice and political oppression throughout the world, and conscious of the historic moments through which the nation is passing, will create laws which will guarantee to all citizens of Croatia-Slavonia full individual and civil liberty, also equal rights and the assurance against all arbitrary interference.

"Croatia is to-day almost the only country in the Monarchy where no public meeting bearing a political character is permitted, although the theatre of war is far from its frontiers: the workers are debarred from all action, even from such as is permitted in the zone of war proper, as in Sarajevo, Trieste, Rijeka, Ljubljana, etc. The Croatian workers are condemned to watch, with folded hands, the shrinkage of the purchasing power of their wages, the havoc wrought by tuberculosis and other diseases among their wives and children. They are relegated to the level of beasts of burden, who have no rights except to keep silence, to pull their load and, when their time comes, to die.

"Therefore we request the Croatian Diet:—

I. To appeal to the Royal Government of the country to abolish the decrees suppressing freedom of assembly, of speech, of the Press and of association, all the more so as the restrictions provided by the law in these matters are in themselves sufficiently great to prevent any abuse of the limited constitutional rights granted to our people.

II. To pass laws introducing:

(1) Universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage, with due representation for minorities (proportional system), and the communal vote for elections to all representative bodies, *i.e.*, for the Diet, the District Assemblies and Municipal Councils. The vote to be granted to all citizens over twenty years of age, without distinction of sex, religion or race.

(2) The absolute freedom of association (Croatia, where the Absolutist Bach Patent is applied to associations, is the only country in the whole Monarchy where no political association may be constituted).

(3) Freedom of speech, of assembly and of the Press, with corresponding reforms in the existing penal laws and the laws concerning the Press.

(4) A law regulating special measures in time of war, which will prevent all abuse on the part of the executive authorities, and in particular restrict the powers of the court martials and guarantee the regular procedure for all accused persons and defendants.

(5) The institution of Courts of Assizes for all offences punishable by more than one year of detention.

(6) The organisation of public administration on autonomist lines. Communal autonomy (local self-government), districts and counties to become organisations of free citizens. The insupportable tutelage exercised by the bureaucracy, and unworthy of a free people, to be abolished.

"In formulating these demands in the name of the Socialist workers, we are convinced that the whole nation and Parliament are agreed with us regarding the necessity of their immediate realisation. For this reason we do not consider it necessary to explain each of these wishes separately or to give detailed reasons for them. We are merely taking this opportunity of the resumption of Parliamentary labour to voice our aspirations in view of the liberation, unification and democratic constitution of our nation, which aspirations we formulate in the name of the Socialist workers who have no representative in Parliament, not only because of political and constitutional restrictions but also owing to the abuses and the tyranny of which the administrative authorities have rendered themselves guilty towards the Socialist party during the electoral contests."

The things we claim in this petition are primary and elementary matters inherent in every, even a bourgeoisie, democracy. Nevertheless, we met with a refusal. We had to go on living under military and feudal despotism.

Our Austrian comrades cannot be ignorant of this deplorable system of government, because similar oppression is extended also to the other nationalities of Austria-Hungary. Still, this has not prevented them from stating in their Memorandum that the policy of Austria-Hungary is favourable to the preservation of small nationalities. It is altogether incomprehensible to us, how one can, from a Socialist point of view, consider "favourable to small nationalities," a policy which poisons the public life of the people by *agents provocateurs*, drives its citizens to despair and purposes the extermination of whole nations from an

ethical, political and economic point of view—a policy which is tarnished by forgeries, by the gallows and by judicial murders.

As we have said before, the strait-jacket which confined us has been slightly relaxed, but we are still far from final liberation. We are too well acquainted with the macchiavellian policy of Austria-Hungary, which has so often made use of democracy for counter-revolutionary purposes. We know that her men in power were never well-disposed towards the people except when they were in a tight corner. Therefore we can place no reliance upon their promises unless these are followed up by corresponding acts.

But there is something better to be done than to complain of injustice and to dream of liberty. That is to fight for this liberty—to realise it. The Southern Slavs, though exhausted, are still fighting—and will continue to fight. But this fight is a battle for their resurrection, for their liberation from the social and national oppression of centuries.

As true Socialists, we have nothing against a general peace which would serve the common interests of the international proletariat and of humanity at large. We demand the international regulation of the rights of Labour, and we demand special attention for the workers in backward countries, in order to liberate them from slavery and bring them nearer to civilisation. The *Internationale* must be transformed into a higher legislative and executive of the proletariat of the world so as to enable it to act in the interest of the world peace.

The Delegation is in favour of the International League of Nations, the fundamental rules of which will be:—

(*a*) The suppression of secret diplomacy.
(*b*) Democratic control of foreign policy.
(*c*) Disarmament.
(*d*) The freedom of the seas.
(*e*) Obligatory international arbitration with obligatory delay in giving verdicts.
(*f*) The internationalisation or neutralisation of the highroads of the world (Straits, canals, etc.).
(*g*) Freedom of commerce.
(*h*) Open door for colonies.
(*i*) Regulation of world production.
(*k*) General democratisation of public life.
(*l*) Political emancipation of women.

In order to ensure that to-morrow's peace shall be a true peace, conceived in accordance with the principles proclaimed by the Russian Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates, *i.e.*, a peace without annexations or indemnities, based on the free self-determination of peoples, *we claim in the name of the Southern Slavs (Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) and in the interests of the world's proletariat, as well as in that of the world's peace, that the Jugoslav nation also be granted*

the right to constitute itself into an independent State from the economic and political point of view, a sovereign State invested with all the powers proper to it, so as to enable it to join the Republican Confederation of all the other Balkan States, and in future to serve the interests of universal peace to the utmost of its power in conformity with the decisions taken at the first Inter-Balkan Socialist Conference which we look upon as offering the only final possible solution of the Balkan problem in its entirety.

As regards the general question of the future fate of nations we, as good Socialists, repudiate all colonial policy of conquest. We are fully agreed with our comrades of the German Independent Socialist party upon the point that every colony, where the native population is not self-governing, merely represents the appropriation of unfree human beings.

As regards the Ukrainians, the Poles, Czechs, Jews, Finns and other nationalities, we endorse the declarations submitted by their respective delegates. With regard to the special reform of the community of nations, we accept, jointly with our Ukrainian Comrades, the idea of establishing a special organ, charged with defending the interests of nations. It would be attached to the International Bureau of Arbitration. The decisions of this organ must be binding upon all.

We demand the political independence of Belgium and her complete restoration at the expense of the invader, as the German Chancellor promised at the time. As for the problem of Alsace-Lorraine, we are of opinion that the best solution would be offered by an understanding between the German and French Socialists.

The Conference convoked will not achieve any positive result unless the questions dealt with by it are also dealt with by the Diplomatic Conference. In order to achieve this, it is necessary that, in accordance with the Hollando-Scandinavian Committee, all Socialist parties and all economic organisations should refuse all assistance to such Governments as fail to publish their war aims or openly or secretly pursue imperialist aims. We on our part consider that the delegates of any party, refusing to consider the decision of the Conference as binding, should submit this question to the next General Congress of their party.

For the Socialist Parties of Croatia-Slavonia and of Bosnia and Hercegovina.

Mijo Radosević.

Franjo Markić.

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